

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 9382

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, BR

SUBJECT: ARMED FORCES UNITY REAFFIRMED

SUMMARY: ARMY MINISTER GENERAL SILVIO FROTA AND AT LEAST TWO OTHER TOP MILITARY LEADERS USED OCCASION OF AIR FORCE DAY, OCTOBER 23, TO REAFFIRM UNITY OF ARMED FORCES AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE IDEALS OF THE REVOLUTION IN CURRENT PERIOD OF DIFFICULTIES. STATEMENTS ARE SEEN AS REBUTTAL OF RUMORS OF MILITARY DISSIDENCE OVER RISK CONTRACTS DECISION AS WELL AS WARNING TO ANY POTENTIAL MILITARY DISSENTERS OF IMPERATIVES OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN BRIEF SPEECH AT CEREMONIES MARKING AIR FORCE DAY, WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL AND OTHER CABINET LEVEL OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE, ARMY MINISTER FROTA CONCLUDED BRIEF SPEECH LAUDING HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE BY STATING THAT "IN DEFENSE OF OUR DEMOCRATIC IDEALS AND THE GENUINE INTERESTS OF BRAZILIAN PEOPLE, THE ARMED FORCES WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED. THUS IT WAS IN THE PAST, IN 1964, AND THUS IT WILL BE EVERY TIME IN WHICH THE NATION CONFRONTS ITS MOST SERIOUS AND DIFFICULT OPTIONS."

2. RESPONDING TO FROTA, THE MINISTER OF AVIATION, LT. BRIGADIER
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ARARIPE MACEDO, SAW BRAZIL AS IN "DECISIVE MOMENT," WITH RECENT

STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT GEISEL LEAVING NO ROOM FOR DOUBT ABOUT GRAVITY OF SITUATION WORLD CRISIS HAS BROUGHT TO BRAZIL. ARARIPE CONSIDERED FROTA'S AFFIRMATION OF NITY "AS REFLECTING THE IDENTITY OF THOUGHT THAT NEVER HAS FAILED US AND--EVEN MORE--THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT DEMANDS THE EFFORTS AND UNDERSTANDING ASKED OF THE PEOPLE, ARARIPE CONTINUED, IS POSSIBLE ONLY WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF ABSOLUTE SOCIAL TRANQUILITY AND POLITICAL ORDER, WHICH ARMED FORCES MUST PRESERVE AT ALL COSTS.

3. AIR MINISTER SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT CURRENT SITUATION IS PROPITIOUS FOR SURGE OF INTERESTED RUMORS THAT "SEEK TO SPLIT MANY FOR THE BENEFIT OF A FEW" AND WHICH "MISLEAD BY DENYING THE SPIRIT WHICH GUIDES THE ARMED FORCES: OUR UNBREAKABLE UNITY."

4. AT SEPARATE AIR FORCE DAY OBSERVANCES IN SAO PAULO, SECOND ARMY CHIEF, EDNARDO D'AVILA MELLO SAID THE CEREMONY "CONFIRMED THE INDESTRUCTIBLE COMRADESHIP THAT UNITES SOLDIERS OF THE ARMED FORCES." RECALLING ARMED FORCES' UNITY IN THE WORLD WAR II A STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND IN THE 1964 REVOLUTION, MELLO SAID ARMED FORCES NOW COMMITTED TO STRUGGLE AGAINST "RED FASCISM." HE CITED ARMED FORCES COMRADES WHO HAD BEEN VICTIMS OF TERRORISM AND WARNED THAT "THE TRAITORS ARE TRYING TO REORGANIZE BY SPEAKING OF LIBERTY, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE COMMITTED TO A SINGLE PARTY, AND ABOUT NATIONALISM, ALTHOUGH THEY RECEIVE ORIENTATION AND FUNDS FROM ABROAD." HE WARNED THAT THE "TRAITORS, RED FASCISTS AND ACCOMMODATORS ARE "NON GRATA" TO OUR UNION, OUR UNITY OF PURPOSE, AND TO OUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE VALUES OF THE 1964 REVOLUTION." MELLO CONCLUDED WITH APPEAL THAT ARMED FORCES "BE ALWAYS UNITED, FAITHFUL TO THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE NATION, AND WITH CONFIDENCE IN OUR LEADERS."

COMMENT: WHILE RHETORIC ABOUT FIRMNESS OF MILITARY UNITY IS NOT EXCEPTIONAL ON SUCH OCCASIONS, IT IS SIGNIFICANT FOR ITS TIMING AND CIRCUMSTANCES. JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO WAS QUOTED AS CALLING FROTA'S STATEMENTS OF "UTMOST IMPORTANCE." THE SPEECHES REPRESENT THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP'S FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE RECENT ECONOMIC MEASURES, RECOGNIZING IN CONFIDENTIAL

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EFFECT THAT THE MEASURES HAVE HAD SOME UNSETTLING EFFECTS. STATEMENTS APPEAR INTENDED TO GIVE SHOW OF MILITARY SOLIDARITY AT TIME OF UNCERTAINTY AND TO REBUT CONTINUING RUMORS - LARGELY FROM CIVILIAN SOURCES--THA RISK CONTRACTS DECISION AND OTHER ECONOMIC MEASURES HAVE NOT BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY SOME SEGMENTS OF OFFICER CORPS. AT SAME TIME STATEMENTS ARE WARNING TO ANY DISSENTING OFFICERS THAT,NOW THAT DECISION IS MADE, FURTHER DEBATE IS CLOSED AND MILITARY VIRTUES

OF LOYALTY AND UNITY REQUIRE THAT THEY JOIN WITH THEIR
LEADERS IN SUPPORTING IT.
STATEMENTS ALSO SUGGEST THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES MILITARY'S
DRIVE AGAINST SUBVERSIVES WILL IF ANYTHING BE STEPPED UP.
MELLO'S STRESS ON CONTINUATION OF CAMPAIGN AGAINST "RED FASCISM"
SEEMS IN PART TO BE JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTENSIVE AND
CONTROVERSIAL CAMPAIGN OF ARRESTS AGAINST ALLEGED SUBVERSIVES
IN SAO PAULO AREA NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY SECOND ARMY, WHICH
HAS NETTED SOME TRADE UNION LEADERS AND JOURNALISTS, SOME OF
WHOM ARE ACTIVISTS OF OPPOSITON MDB. END COMMENT.
JOHNSON

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